



Palos Verdes/South Bay Chapter

Newsletter - September 2020

*Discovering Ways to Connect through
Making Music*



From the keyboard of the President, **LaVerne M. McCoy** –
To the Palos Verdes South Bay Alumni Chapter of Mu Phi
Epsilon,

“Greetings!”

Behind the scene...

Your Board members have been very active gathering information, editing, and presenting content for the 2020–21 Yearbook. KUDOS and special thanks to **Debra Shrader, David Champion, Darlene Vlasek, and LaVerne McCoy**. Led by **Mika Yamamoto** and **Jennifer Holly Cannon**, our vice-Presidents, we plan to work on programs that entertain, perform, and utilize the talent of our members. You see we are not to be deterred by

COVID-19. The September 15, 2020 meeting we plan to review and critique all of the work we have prepared.

All are welcome to attend the board meetings. We are currently attending by ZOOM.

If you would like to attend send **David Champion** a message and he will include you in the invitation.

ANNOUNCEMENT from Jennifer Holly Cannon and Mika Yamamoto:

***General Meeting on September 20, 2020 at 3:00 PM
Discovering Ways to Connect through Making Music -
“Enjoying Music Virtually”***

Invited Members of Chapter Membership and Patron Membership will share ways they've connected with the audience and students virtually, yet through their organic making of music.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87811444151?pwd=YVdYZ0NmcXZzOUk1Mm5UOFNPWXExZz09>

A Special News Item

COVID Challenge: Completing my Master of Music degree during the pandemic

By **Julio J. Sequeira** (*Gamma Sigma*), former president of MPE

Before I finished my master's degree in music teaching and learning from the University of Southern California (USC) last May, I had to navigate murky and uncertain waters. Finishing one's education is a joyous occasion, but during a pandemic, it's filled with mixed emotions. At times I thought I was going to drown in the wave of chaos that had overtaken the world in early spring.

My journey began in December 2019. Plan A was to study the musical experiences of immigrant music students. Unfortunately, USC's Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined I had a conflict of interest since I would be interviewing my students at the high school where I teach. I had to abandon that idea and scramble to find a teacher to host the study. Luckily, one of my colleagues had agreed. Threat averted! — or so I thought.



Defending my thesis

The IRB wanted the district's permission, but its approval window wouldn't open again until April, and only for studies to be conducted in the 2020-21 academic year. Plan B was also a no-go. January came and went, and I still needed a plan.

In February, another colleague at another district offered to host me and my study. His principal was on board too. They both petitioned their district on my behalf for a fast-track approval. Their superintendent was also notified. I needed to submit my paperwork right away. I was told it would be about three weeks until I could do my interviews, which put me at the beginning of March. The first week of March, I received my letter of approval from the host district and sent it to the IRB. I still had enough time to finish my paper by the middle of April.

By now the COVID-19 was making an impact in the US.



Graduation Day with my mom

During the second of week of March my district shut down, and shortly after, the host district closed down too. USC also shut down its campus. I hoped I could interview the students for the study via Zoom, but I never got a chance to meet with the interviewees nor were my

emails responded to. I don't blame the schools for not responding; they had bigger issues to deal with than my thesis. Plan C went down the drain.

By mid-March, my advisor and I were looking for a Plan D. The department chair suggested an extensive literature review on the topic of immigrant music students. I quickly found out there was not much literature on it. What was available focused on Europe and Australia, and very little existed that focused on the United States. My advisor suggested that I used my personal experiences in the classroom to bring the literature review to life. We found a Plan D!

I spent the following month reading all the literature that I could get my hands on the subject. Towards the end of April, I had what resembled a master's thesis. Did I mentioned that at the same time I was also working trying to navigate remote learning with my high school students?

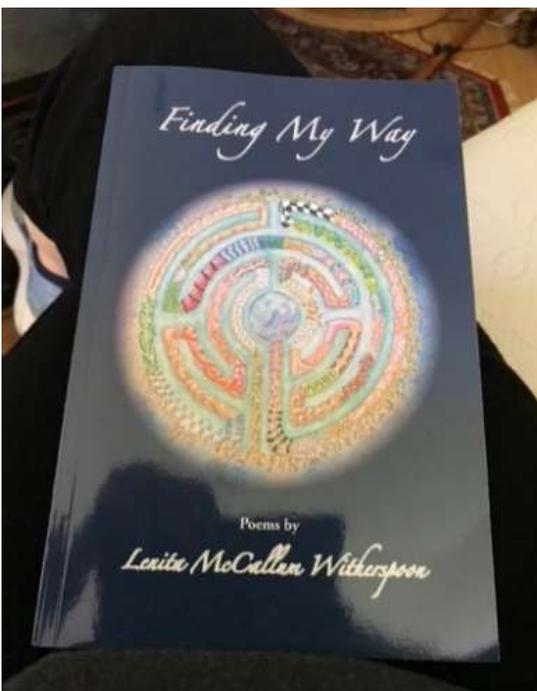
By the first week of May I had completed my paper. It was a marathon writing session that often took me well into the late night. But I was done! I just had to wait to defend my thesis during the second week of May. After my defense I was finally able to sleep!

Graduation was a subdued event as USC had a virtual conferring of degrees. Later that day, my wife and mom conspired to throw me a surprise drive-by graduation parade. I walked outside and said, "Look, someone is having a drive-by care parade today." My wife looked at me and said, "Yeah, *you* are! This is for *you*!"



Graduation celebration with my wife, Wendy (Gamma Sigma)

Chapter News



Lenita has published her long-awaited book of poetry. She began it 18 years ago after the death of Charlie Brown. It's available on Amazon. She's calling it her Covid-19 project, assisted by David Witherspoon. Lenita writes: "The subject matter ranges from widowhood and grief, to reflections on scriptures and observations of nature, family and life in general. It also contains lovely line drawings by my artist friend, Nancy Backes. So, thank you "covid", you gave us/me the time to put to getting the job done."

David has written a long narrative about the creation of the book, which I'm sure he'll share anytime!

Leadership Zoom Meeting

Tanner Wilson, PSW1 DD e-vited the Presidents from the Alumni chapters and the collegiate chapters to meet, virtually to become acquainted and to share ideas. Tanner was able to share from the fraternity, ask and answer questions, and brainstorm on how to survive the Covid-19. Two of the collegiate chapter's presidents were unable to attend.



Those presidents attending were **Fontaine Laing**, **Dr. Sally Etcheto**, **Darlene Vlasek**, **LaVerne M McCoy**, were the Alumni representatives. The collegiate presidents were **Jason Pano** and **Shania Carden**. We all agreed that a meeting a month would be great while we are restricted by covid-19.

Mika Yamamoto reports that the following awards are given for members and the chapter for SERV during the 2019-2020 year:

- FourthPlace in Circle of Winners
- Outstanding Alumni Chapter, Pacific Southwest Chapter
- Honorable Mention for Noteworthy Project (TLC a cappella group)
- Honorable Mention for Community Service Project ("Golden Members" concert)
- SERV Awards for 300+ Hours: Anne Destabelle, Lenita McCallum, Debra Shrader, Darlene Vlasek

Musical Offerings from Our Members

Annette Warren Smith recorded a short concert, accompanied by Bob Remstein, through YouTube this past April. It is worth your attention!

<https://youtu.be/WhINVHnsBI8>

Member and Patron News

From Darlene Vlasek, Musical Mosaic Chair –

Always with the intent of looking at the bright side of conditions and situations, it is with grateful excitement that I share with you the wonderful news that we will be holding our Musical Mosaic on **February 6, 2021 at 4:00 pm**. As with everything else this year, it will be a virtual event. However, that very requirement is allowing this to be a thrilling concert of “**Music without Borders.**” We will be featuring highly celebrated musicians from the east coast to the west coast and from places in between. This will be a uniquely wonderful experience for all to enjoy. We will even be able to engage in live chats with the performers. Details of the performers, the concert format, tickets, and virtual attendance will be announced in the upcoming months.

Please mark your calendars now to attend this outstanding event, a new and exciting way of enjoying our annual gift to the community and major fundraiser in support of public school music programs.



DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

All events from the 2020-2021 Yearbook Calendar will appear here until the yearbook is published soon.

September 20th, 2020 3:00 PM – Virtual Regular Meeting with program topic “Enjoying Music Virtually.” Awards will be presented at this zoom meeting. You can log on with this link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87811444151?pwd=YVdYZ0NmcXZzOUk1Mm5UOFNPWXExZz09>

October 6th, 2020 – Newsletter deadline (send items to LaVerne or Darlene or Debra)